



English Matters

Spring is here, so guess what that means?

Well, yes, among other things it means that the cherry blossoms are about to explode into life. The riot of color and renewal that is the Japanese spring festival of Hanami is upon us. And if you've never taken it upon yourself to see it in person, well, what in the world are you waiting for? Do yourself a favor and head out to the Brooklyn Botanic Garden this month. Write a few haiku under the boughs if you like. And then a few dozen more on the subway ride back home.

But back here at John Jay, the coming of spring paradoxically means it's time to start planning for next semester. Registration for Fall '11 courses starts today, along with sign-ups for our summer offerings. To get you in the mood for what lies ahead, and to give you some guidance as you plan your course of study in the major, this issue of English Matters will give you a sneak peek at what your professors have in store for you.

One more thing: as our humble suggestion to get out into this great city and get writing makes clear, we here in the English department encourage the growth of our student writers both in and out of the classroom. In that spirit, check out this month's profile of some of the folks who are behind John Jay's student newspaper. Perhaps you'll be inspired to join them: with a Journalism Minor in the works, it's never been a better time to do so, or to find some other way of putting yourself out there and building your skills as a writer.

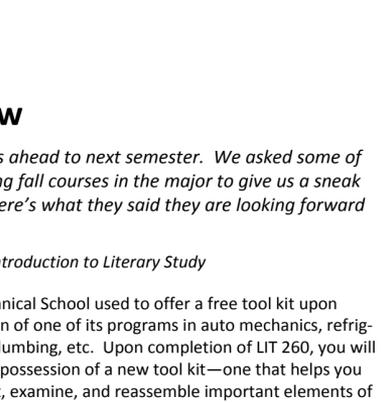
So read on, and enjoy!

Major Notes

TO: YOU
FR: PROF. PEASE
RE: COME SEE ME THIS WEEK!!!

Dear Majors,

I love meeting with you to discuss your concerns, figure out your schedules, and help you progress in the English Major. This week I will be in my office Monday-Thursday ready to help you:



Here I am helping English Major Rashida Davis last fall: doesn't she look happy?

- *plan the shortest route to graduation
- *provide information on pre-and co-requisites for courses
- *share strategies for managing course load to improve academic performance
- *direct you to resources on careers, scholarships, internships, and graduate programs
- *help you get questions answered and refer you to campus resources

Let me help you make the most of your time with us. If you haven't already, you can schedule an appointment with me by clicking on this link to the Doodle calendar schedule: <http://doodle.com/8vht76zn4ztp9u3w>.

Prof. Alison Pease
English Major Advisor

Fall Course Preview

In this issue, English Matters looks ahead to next semester. We asked some of the professors who will be teaching fall courses in the major to give us a sneak peek at what they're planning. Here's what they said they are looking forward to:



Prof. Adam McKible

LIT 260: Introduction to Literary Study

Apex Technical School used to offer a free tool kit upon completion of one of its programs in auto mechanics, refrigeration, plumbing, etc. Upon completion of LIT 260, you will also be in possession of a new tool kit—one that helps you take apart, examine, and reassemble important elements of literature. In other words, LIT 260 is a technical class, and we will be just as interested in learning about how literature works as in what it "means."



Prof. Ann Huse

LIT 260: Introduction to Literary Study

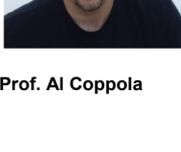
In my sections, we will explore the conflicts between military culture and civilian values. Readings will include Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*; Richard Brinsley Sheridan's *The Rivals*, an eighteenth-century comedy of manners; a selection of Hemingway's short stories; and some poetry from World War I.



Prof. Helen Kapstein

LIT 300: Text and Context

We all know that plagiarism's a big no-no, but what about borrowing? Imitating? Adapting? Appropriating? We'll ask these questions and many more as we read a selection of British postcolonial texts that rewrite canonical texts in order to call them and their assumptions into question.



Prof. Paul Narkunas

LIT 300: Text and Context

This course will focus on the novels and criticism of J.M. Coetzee and his challenges to the South African government's policy of racial apartheid. We will also discuss general issues of censorship and the arts in South Africa and elsewhere, and take into account how literature offers alternative "truths" to power in contexts of political despotism. Along the way, students will be exposed to critical race theory, postcolonial theory, formalism, theories of gender and racial construction, and the politics of life itself (biopolitics).



Prof. Toy-Fung Tung

LIT 305: Foundations of Literature and Law

"Outsiders, Aliens, and Others: Legal and Literary Exclusions" will focus on legal exclusions, in deportation and immigration laws and policies, and in Supreme Court cases. We will also examine "othering," as expressed in Old Testament stories of violence, medieval myths of monstrous races, descriptions of the New World's cannibalistic Indians, Shakespeare's heroes and villains, and a contemporary novel.



Prof. Jeffrey Heiman

ENG 218: The Writing Workshop

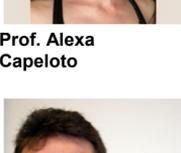
An introduction to several of the major creative writing genres, we work on personal narrative, fiction and poetry. It's relaxed and rigorous at the same time, a creative environment in which everyone writes, everyone participates in guided critiques, and new storytellers and poets discover their voices.



Prof. Veronica Hendrick

LIT 305: Foundations of Literature and Law

How do you get from Plato's *The Republic* to Harper Lee's *To Kill A Mockingbird* in one semester? In Lit 305, of course. We will analyze one theme, the "misapplication of a Just Law," through different historical periods and unique legal structures (such as military or religious law) using multiple literary forms.



Prof. Al Coppola

LIT 395: Satire

What difference **does** satire make? When Tina Fey mocks Sarah Palin, is she delivering a political death-blow, or is she just making her more notorious? Is the satirist making a principled political critique that can change people's minds, or is she just showing off for laughs that can somehow rub off on her target. There are no obvious answers here, as this historical survey of satire theory and practice will show. We'll read a range of smart-mouth texts with bad attitudes, from ancient Rome to our own day, with a special emphasis on writers of the British 18th century.



Prof. Jay Walitalo

LIT 325: The Science Fiction Film

Calling all geeks! Does your boyfriend or girlfriend hate your science fiction? Are you embarrassed that you know the difference between a cyborg and an android? We need you. Set your phaser on stun and join us.



Prof. P. J. Gibson

ENG 215: Poetry Writing and Reading

In this course you will read and write poetry, from the techniques, voices and skills of many great poets from the past and present, and you will utilize such forms as free verse, rhyme, prose, the limerick, haiku, villanelle, pantoum and the sestina to generate your own collection of poetry. The students will be expected to present their own original works to the class in video sessions and to generate work for our public Poetry Board on campus.



Prof. Pat Licklider

LIT 370: Topics in Ancient Literature

Is the desire for revenge just? How does a society reconcile the personal need for revenge with the larger demands of justice for all? We will begin with Homer's epics and Aeschylus's tragedies before going on to the Hindu Ramayana and the biblical stories of Moses and David. While reading about the law systems in these cultures, we'll also take up some modern examples of revenge to assess how far we resemble or differ from these ancient examples.



Prof. Andy Majeske

LIT 372: Topics in Early Modern Literature

With a focus on Milton & Machiavelli, this is the only course next fall in which you'll read the ultimate tour guide to hell, a how-to-guide for men to get the women of their dreams, a how-to-guide for women to cheat on their husbands, and a behind-the-scenes exposé of the greatest story ever told. SPOILER ALERT: Adam and Eve were victims of the biggest entrapment scheme since John DeLorean. (Don't know who he is? Better Google him—and buckle up for a wild ride.)



Prof. Carolyn Reitz

LIT 374: Topics in Nineteenth-Century Literature

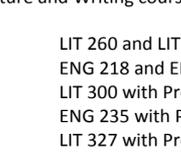
One of the things I love about the Victorians is that they were both like us (struggling with technology and profound social changes) and really odd (*Alice in Wonderland*, anyone?). Come get to know them through a range of different readings from scandalous novels and fantasy stories to poems and essays about Queens, goblins and, well, people like us.



Prof. Alexa Capeloto

ENG 230: Journalism in the 21st Century

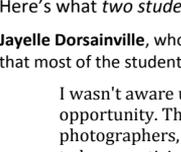
A look at journalism in the 21st Century, including social media, digital communication, niche journalism and more. We'll also tour the NY Times and the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism.



Prof. Alexander Schlutz

LIT 290.1: Writing Nature: Literature and Eco-Criticism

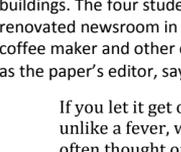
is there any connection between literature and nature? Can fiction play any role in countering an escalating, man-made environmental crisis that threatens to make large parts of the globe uninhabitable in the relatively near future? Eco-critics answer "yes" on both counts. In this course we will examine the methods, concepts, and goals of ecocriticism, and we will also practice "green reading" in our analysis of nineteenth- and twentieth-century British and American literature.



Prof. Veronica Hendrick

LIT 290 Section 2: Special Topics: Native American Literature

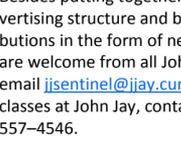
Native American Literature is being offered for the first time at John Jay College. In this course, we will read modern novels and short stories, transcribed oral histories, and co-written autobiographies to investigate the way historically significant events—like the building of the Transcontinental Railroad, the California Gold Rush, and the Oklahoma Land Runs—have been imagined by Native American people.



Prof. Richard Perez

LIT 393: What The Stranger Knows: the Face, Otherness, and Ethics in U.S. Latino/a Literature

Why is the knowledge a stranger offers vital to us? How are we expanded and threatened by their presence? In what ways are we strangers to ourselves? These are only a few of the questions that will drive this course. Not to mention a list of wondrous authors.



Prof. Jay Gates

LIT 394: Chaucer

A valiant knight, his lusty squire, a saucy widow, a corrupt clergyman, a drunken and rowdy miller go on a pilgrimage... It isn't a joke, it is the frame for Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. In this course, which will also consider some of his shorter works, we will analyze Chaucer's dynamic characters, explore his masterful use of the Middle English language, and investigate his engagement with contemporary social, literary, and gender debates in texts that continue to fascinate modern audiences.

Prof. Bettina Carbone

LIT 223: African-American Literature

When Langston Hughes begins one of his poems by saying, "I, too, sing America," he is calling for artistic recognition and calling attention to an ongoing struggle for freedom, equality, respect and justice. We will focus on Hughes and other major African American writers whose achievements in poetry, song, autobiography, fiction, and drama stand as powerful indictments of the status quo and eloquent calls for change. These writer / activists include: Frederick Douglass, Charles Chesnut, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, W.E.B. DuBois, Zora Neale Hurston, L. Hughes, Toni Morrison, Ernest Gaines and August Wilson.

Prof. Devon Harner

ENG 233: News Reporting and Writing

Learn the basics of reporting and writing, and spend a lab hour each week working on the student newspaper, where your work might be published.

Prof. Liza Yukins

LIT 316: Gender and Identity in Literary Traditions

Have you ever wondered why there are only two public restroom categories: "women" and "men"? And what separates male bonding and male homoerotics: what really distinguishes them, and why are Americans so anxious to keep them apart? In this course, we will investigate how race, class, and sexual definitions coalesce at the point of gender, which proves an imprecise—yet tenacious—identity marker in modern American culture. Possible authors may include Maxine Hong Kingston, Edward Jones, Junot Diaz, David Henry Hwang, Tim O'Brien, and Alison Bechdel.

Prof. Olivera Jokic

LIT 316: Gender and Identity in Literary Traditions

Does it matter if a book was written by a woman or a man? Do you read differently when you know the author's gender? Do you read different books because you are man or a woman (think of 'chick lit' for example)? This course will look at how men and women have written about masculinity and femininity in a variety of periods and geographic regions. If these conventions change constantly, how come we still think that gender is a meaningful category?

Prof. Jay Gates

Eng 398: History of the English Language

An introduction to various forms of the language, from Old English to Modern. We'll discuss dialects and how communities shape language to their own needs. And we'll see how language drives thought. PLEASE NOTE: This class is being opened up as an Independent Study to all interested. We will have to schedule dates and times to meet. If you are interested, please e-mail Professor Gates at jgates@jay.cuny.edu.

And that's not all! See the [Fall Course Bulletin](#) for full details on all the Literature and Writing courses being offered for English Majors, including:

- LIT 260 and LIT 315 with Prof. Burleigh
- ENG 218 and ENG 216 with Prof. Berlin
- LIT 300 with Prof. Majumdar
- ENG 235 with Prof. McBeth
- LIT 327 with Prof. Gray
- LIT 319 with Prof. Escher
- LIT 400 with Prof. Mills

Journalism at John Jay

Since we're looking ahead to next semester in this issue of English Matters, it's the perfect time to check in with our student journalists. Next year will begin an exciting new English Minor in Journalism, but many of your peers are already building their skills as reporters, editors, photographers, and layout-artists. Here's what two students had to say about their experiences so far:

Jayelle Dorsainville, who has worked on the paper for the past couple of years, says that most of the student population isn't aware that there is a school newspaper:

I wasn't aware until I signed up for a journalism class, and it presented an opportunity. The *John Jay Sentinel* is a student newspaper with editors, photographers, senior writers and junior writers. A student does not have to have participated in a journalism course in order to contribute. The editors even offer help in constructing a news story. Working alongside the staff during the journalism course was a major benefit to my comprehension of this style of writing. The *Sentinel* staff conduct interviews, research, and collaborate on every story published. Journalism became a profession that I could see for myself, and this time spent at the *Sentinel* is helping me prepare. But a paper is only as good as its readership. Students can have a piece of their work published but they rarely take the opportunity.

At least twice a semester you can find the paper at the entrances of the college's buildings. The four student editors elected in Spring 2010 can usually be found in the renovated newsroom in 1535N. The room has six computers, a couch, a microwave, a coffee maker and other essentials for any journalist. **Eric Jankiewicz**, who has worked as the paper's editor, says that working for a newspaper is "like a fever."

If you let it get out of control it destroys most aspects of your life. But unlike a fever, wonderful things come about in healthy dosages. Writing is often thought of as a slow process in which various, tedious stages must be taken in order to create publishable material. Journalistic writing shatters this ritual. Here is our version. In one minute you have your first draft, in two minutes a second, and then your final draft comes about in that third minute. In many ways this kind of writing is a like a rigorous workshop. When I go home my mind is still on reporting, still on that story that could be running away while I am sleeping. *John Jay Sentinel* is a small publication. But we hope to have a website created by next year and an issue released once a week.

Besides putting together the next issue, the editors are working on establishing an advertising structure and building a Sentinel website. And they always need help. Contributions in the form of news tips, stories, photos, illustrations or design/layout work are welcome from all John Jay students. Stop by 1535N to speak with an editor, or email jsentinel@jay.cuny.edu. For more about the Journalism Minor or journalism classes at John Jay, contact **Prof. Alexa Capeloto** (acapeloto@jay.cuny.edu) or (646) 557-4546.

English Matters 3.3 is a more-or-less regular publication of the John Jay English Department for the instruction and delight of students in our major and minor programs. Questions? Comments? Complaints? Want to get involved? Contact the editors, Prof. Al Coppola, acoppola@jay.cuny.edu, and Prof. Olivera Jokic, ojokic@jay.cuny.edu.